DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 444 921 SO 032 079

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TITLE	Improving Student Attitudes and Achievement in Art.
PUB DATE	2000-05-00
NOTE	68p.; M.A. Research Project, Saint Xavier University and Skylight Professional Development Program.
PUB TYPE	Dissertations/Theses (040)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Achievement; Action Research; *Art Activities; *Art Products; *Childrens Art; *Classroom Techniques; Grade 8; Junior High Schools; *Student Attitudes; Student Improvement; Student Projects
IDENTIFIERS	*Curriculum Implementation

ABSTRACT

A program for improving student attitudes and achievement in art was developed and implemented. Targeted population consisted of eighth-grade students (n=28) in a junior high school in a suburban community near a large Midwestern city. The problem of poor attitudes and disinterest in art was documented with student surveys and self assessments, a behavior checklist, and teacher anecdotal records. Analysis of probable cause indicated that students considered art a low priority in their education, leading to poor quality, missing, or late assignments. Review of the research indicated that art is not regarded as a major content area and is overlooked or displaced in the curriculum, and often considered only necessary for the artistically talented. A review of suggested solution strategies, combined with analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the establishment of a professional art gallery to display student work, the matting and framing of student projects, and the creation of student portfolios. The program also included new lessons geared to be meaningful and relevant for students. Activities and discussion topics were developed to communicate to students that art is not only for the artistically talented. A description of the art program and its importance in their children's well rounded education was presented to parents at an open house. Post-intervention data indicated that more students exhibited an interest in art and gave the subject a higher priority in their education. Research is necessary to determine whether improved attitudes and achievement are a result of the intervention. (Contains 17 tables of data and 29 references. Eleven appendixes contain forms, surveys, letters, and assignments.) (BT)

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IMPROVING STUDENT ATTITUDES AND ACHIEVEMENT IN ART

Mary Benton

An Action Research Project Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
School of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Masters of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

St. Xavier University & Skylight
Field-Based Masters Program
Chicago, Illinois

May, 2000

SO 032 079

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Dedication

For my loving family.

Life is a big canvas. Throw all the paint on it you can.
Danny Kaye

ABSTRACT

This report describes a program for improving attitudes and achievement in art. The targeted population consisted of eighth grade students in a junior high school. The school is located in a suburban community, near a large city in the Midwest. The problem of poor attitudes and disinterest in art was documented with student surveys and self-assessments, a behavior checklist and teacher anecdotal records.

Analysis of probable cause indicated that there was a disinterest in art and students considered it a low priority in their education. This led to poor quality, missing or late assignments. Review of the research indicated that art is not regarded as a major content area and is disregarded, overlooked or displaced in the curriculum. Art is often considered only necessary for the artistically talented and was found to be meaningless and insignificant to many students.

A review of solution strategies suggested by other researchers, combined with analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the establishment of a professional art gallery to prominently display student work, the matting and framing of student projects and the creation of student, self critiqued portfolios. The program also included new lessons geared to be meaningful and relevant to students. Activities and discussion topics were developed, in order to communicate to students that art is not only for those who are artistically talented. A description of the art program and it's importance in their child's well rounded education, was presented to parents at Open House.

Post intervention data indicated that more students exhibit an interest in art and consider the subject a higher priority in their education. More research is necessary to determine whether improved attitudes and achievement is a result of the intervention.

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

The students of the targeted 8th grade class exhibit a disinterest in art and consider the subject a low priority in their education. Evidence for this problem includes teacher journal entries describing student behaviors, student surveys and assessments.

Immediate Problem Context

The Junior High is currently in transition physically and philosophically. A new facility is in construction and will be completed by the start of the fall term, 1999. Reconfiguration of the staff includes two and four teacher teams, which involves change in grade levels and subjects. Also, several teams will be looping with their classes the following year.

This is the first year of a modified block scheduling for the core academic classes, as opposed to the traditional schedule of past years. The Foreign Language, Health, Physical Education and Special Services classes are on a traditional 40 minute schedule. In 7th and 8th grade, Art and Music classes are integrated with Language Arts and Social Studies. Industrial Technology and Consumer Technology are integrated with Math and Science. These classes are on a 55 minute block schedule. Teachers of the academic classes bring students to the Arts and Technology rooms for six days, three days with each teacher. Academic teachers remain in the classroom in order to assist the Arts and Technology teacher in the integration of the subject matter and to show connections.

Art classes at the Junior High, from 1976 until 1993, had been scheduled traditionally with 40 minute, quarterly classes. Class sizes ranged from 5 to 20 students. All students were required to take art and could chose from 10 specialized classes. In 1993, due to fiscal issues and budget cuts, reductions were made in the Arts & Technology staff and the

average class size rose to 25. The total number of Arts & Technology teachers was reduced from nine and one half to six. The art department was reduced from two full time teachers to one. All students were required to take art, but it was now a general class.

In spring of 1998, the Board of Education and Administration resolved to offer foreign languages in the schedule. The proposed plan involved adding it to the Arts and Technology block. This meant over 350 hundred children; Band, Orchestra, Chorus, English as a Second Language and all those students who require support services, would be given the option of a foreign language. Should any of these children choose a foreign language, they would be unable to take art in both 7th and 8th grades.

In March of 1998, the Arts and Technology teachers went before the Board of Education to defend the art program and its importance in the curriculum for all students. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Board decided to rethink the proposed schedule and the principal went back to rewrite a new plan. The next day, an integrated block schedule was presented, where students would have Arts and Technology for six days, three times a year for 55 minute classes. All students would have their Arts and Technology classes and could still take a foreign language during the school day. In the 1999-2000 school year, the program was extended to include a seven day rotation, three times a year. One extra day at the end of the year was provided for an integrated field trip or critique / portfolio day.

The school in this study, while predominately white, serves a heterogeneous population. In comparison to state averages, Table 1 shows that there is a higher percentage of White, Asian and Hispanic populations in the school district. The district has a significantly low black population when compared to the state. White non-Hispanic, Black non-Hispanic, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander and Native American (American Indian/Alaskan Native) are the major racial-ethnic groups in the state's public schools. Enrollments were reported as of September 30, 1997.

Table 1

Racial/Ethnic Background

	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/P. Islander	Total Enrollment
Junior High	74.6%	3.0%	13%	9.3%	828
District	71.0%	2.9%	16.9%	9.2%	3,227
State	62.6%	20.8%	13.3%	3.2%	1,951,998

Low-Income students are from families receiving public aid, living in institutions for neglected or delinquent children, being supported in foster homes with public funds, or eligible to receive free or reduced-priced lunches. Table 2 shows that the school district has a much smaller percentage of low-income students than the state.

Limited-English-Proficient students are those found to be eligible for bilingual education. While the school's percentage of bilingual students is below the state average, the district percentage indicates that the lower grades in the district are experiencing an influx of bilingual students.

Table 2

Low-Income and Limited- English Proficient Students

	Low-Income	Limited-English Proficient
Junior High	15.2%	5.2%
District	15.6%	9.1%
State	36.3%	6.3%

A perfect attendance rate (100%) means that all students attended school every day. The student mobility rate is based on the number of students who enrolled in or leave a school during the school year. Students may be counted more than once. Chronic truants are students who were absent from school without valid cause for 10% or more of the last

180 school days. The school's attendance rate is in line with the state's average, as seen in Table 3. When compared to the state, there is less student mobility in the district.

Table 3

Attendance, Mobility and Chronic Truancy

	Attendance	Student Mobility	Chronic Truancy
Junior High	93.6%	5.8%	3.5%
District	95.0%	9.9%	0.9%
State	93.9%	18.2%	2.3%

The district's teacher population is typical of the state's statistics. Teacher data in this section includes classroom teachers and other teachers specializing in art, physical education, music, etc. Table 4 also indicates that the teachers enjoy a lower pupil-teacher ratio than the state average in this district. The surrounding community also plays an important role at the site.

Table 4

Teaching Characteristics

	Average Teaching Experience	Teachers with Bachelor's Degree	Teachers with Master's &Above	Pupil-Teacher Ratio: Elementary
District	15.2 years	48.9%	51.1%	17.7:1
State	15.0 years	53.5%	46.3%	20.0:1

The Surrounding Community

The school in this project serves a suburban community, located between two large metropolitan areas. The community was incorporated in 1950. The population is

approximately 20,000 and is expected to increase due to extensive single family developments under construction. The community has a country-like atmosphere and offers a blend of urban and rural living and is ethnically diverse. While the major ethnic group is predominately White, it also includes high percentages of Asian and Hispanic populations. Considered the premier shopping hub of the county, this community includes business parks for corporations and light manufacturing companies. The most current statistics for the median household income was $55,000 per year in 1989.

There are five schools located in the community. A Junior High and High School are presently under construction. Restructuring of the elementary district will take place in the fall of 1999. It will consist of a Kindergarten, two Primary Schools grades K-4, a Middle School grades 5 and 6, an Option School Grades K-6, and a Junior High grades 7 and 8. A principal and assistant principal will be at each building, with the exception of Kindergarten which will only have a principal. The district office will be housed in the Option School.

District support and priority for education, was demonstrated with the passage of a school wide referendum six years ago. Schools are an important part of communities, however, communities have not always supported art education.

National Context of the Problem

While support given education in the community is high, national priority to art education is low (Bresler, Mabry & Stake, 1991). "This position is evident within the American school system. The visual arts, however, if present at all, are usually treated as a time filler - a recreational diversion from rigorous academic study. Too often there is little concern for developing students' understanding of an appreciation for the world of art" (Greer & Silverman, 1988, p. 11).

According to Eisner, "The public has viewed the arts as having little value other than something to put on the refrigerator door. That conception of art can never compete adequately for time in the school program" (as cited in Brandt, 1988, p. 7). Traditionally, schools have valued linguistic and mathematical intelligences. The visual/ spatial intelligence does not have the same status in schools.

> The arts in school mark a special realm, a realm in which school grades and measures are far less rigid, in which "other intelligences," typically

> not sanctioned by the school, are invited to share in the school day, a realm colored by notions of "fun" rather than work...almost always secondary to academics. (Bresler, Mabry & Stake, 1991, p. 309)

Many view the arts as optional and feel that it is not a necessary subject in the curriculum for all students. "Educators and the public sometimes feel that 'making art' may be interesting and rewarding but is hardly crucial in the context of the child's total education" (Brickell, Jones & Runyan, 1988, p. 15).

Students sense the insignificance and do not value the arts. Davis states, "Young kids come to school with the ability to draw and sing and dance, perform fabulous dramatics. But as they grow, they learn that these things don't matter. Something's been taken away" (as cited in Gaines, 1999, p. 58).

In schools nationally, there is a problem of art being a low priority and a secondary subject in the curriculum. Therefore, student attitude regarding art as an important subject, is also low. Further evidence and investigation have verified that the issue does exist at the targeted site.

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

A letter of consent (Appendix A) was given to students explaining the research project. Student and parent signatures were needed to obtain permission for data to be included in the projects final results.

In order to document poor attitudes and a disinterest in art, teacher journal records , student surveys (Appendix B), behavioral checklists (Appendix C), and student assessments/reflections (Appendix D), were documented and the results were analyzed. Of the 23 students in the art class, 22 were involved in the process. Students came to art class in seven consecutive days for 55 minute class periods. The block of time students were seen was September 17, 1999 through September 28, 1999.

Teacher Journal Records

Table 5 shows teacher journal records of student work taken from an average art class the previous year (1998), when students were in seventh grade.

Table 5

Completed Student Work

Number of Students	Late Projects	Missing projects	Projects turned in on time
28	7	1	20

Analysis of the records of student work indicate from September to December 1998, 28.6% of students in the art class had late or missing assignments. Students did not feel that it was imperative that they complete their assignments on time. When a student did come in to complete a project, they hurried through the assignment just to finish. Time was

not taken on their assignments and they did not concentrate on quality. In addition to teacher journal records, a student survey was given to art students at the site.

Student Surveys

A student survey was given to 22 eighth grade art students at the site during their language arts classes on September 14,1999. There was a 100% return rate. Analysis and interpretation of the student survey are used as data in citing that the problem of poor attitudes and disinterest in art does exist at the site. Results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Student Survey Question 1

	Yes	No
Art is an important subject in my education.	10	12

Analysis of the survey question asking whether or not art is an important subject in their education indicates 55% of students in the art class felt art is not an important subject. Even though the arts have shown major accomplishments and advances, "Some still view the arts as an optional part of the education of children, 'a frill' " (Allen et al., 1998, p. 38). The attitude exists, when there is so much other academic knowledge that students are expected to learn, schools must prioritize the major content areas first (Gaines, 1999). According to Efland, art is often used to enhance these subjects and not valued for it's own sake (as cited in Ulbricht, 1998). In addition to a student survey, a student behavioral checklist was given to students at the site.

Student Behavioral Checklist

A student checklist was given and filled out by students during the first day of class, September 17, 1999. During the previous year, each of the 22 students worked on three projects. Many student art projects never make it home and are often thrown away. This is verified with data from the Student Behavioral Checklist and results are shown in Table 7.

Table 7

What Happened To My Artwork Checklist

Total Student Projects	Threw Away	Saved
66	33	33

Data analysis from the behavioral checklist indicates that 50% of all projects made by students in art class from the previous year were thrown away. Some projects never made it home from school, while others were thrown away at home. Students did not feel that their artwork was worth keeping. This is evidence of students negative attitudes and disinterest towards art. Another source of documentation was written student assessments.

Student Assessments

In order to document what a student is thinking about when working on a project, a final grade/reflection sheet is filled out by each student at the completion of each assignment. Records from assessments from the 22 students from September 1999, indicates 50% of students in the class wrote "none" when asked to write a comment about the project. This shows students do not care about the project, revealing that poor attitudes and a disinterest in art does exist at the site. Further research will explore several causes to the problem.

Probable Causes

There are several causes for poor attitudes and disinterest in art. Many students consider art a minor subject in their education. They often feel it is only for the talented and the subject is not meaningful to them.

Minor Subject

One of the reasons students exhibit a disinterest in art and consider it a low priority in their education, is that it is regarded as a minor subject in the curriculum. "Based on National surveys, most public school teachers and administrators believe art is not a major content area" (Rufer, Lale, Robinson & Hicks, 1998, p. 51).

Those designing the school schedule don't think of art as being cognitive. Often, it is the first subject cut when finances become tight (Hill, 1999). Further documentation confirms this at the site, with the history of the art department. Art classes at the site, from 1976 until

1993, had been scheduled traditionally with 40 minute, quarterly classes, where students could choose from ten specialized courses, such as drawing and painting, ceramics, photography, film and sculpture. In 1993, due to fiscal issues and budget cuts, reductions were made in the arts and the department was reduced from two full time teachers to one. Students were required to take art, but it was now a general class. In spring of 1998, the Board of Education and Administration resolved to offer foreign languages in the schedule. The proposed plan involved adding it to the curriculum, but at the expense of the arts. Arts and technology teachers went before the Board of Education to defend the programs and their importance in the curriculum for all students. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Board decided to rethink the proposed schedule and the current schedule was developed.

When students feel the subject is of minor importance, they often consider it a secondary subject. Other school work is given priority. Question nine of the student survey asked if students ever thought about their projects outside of class. See Table 8.

Table 8

Student Survey Question 9

	Yes	No
Have you ever thought about your art project (reflected) outside of class?	10	12

Analysis of the survey question indicates 55% of students in the art class said they did not think about their projects outside of class. Quality of the artwork is diminished because students feel it is of minor importance. Work is often hurried, turned in late or not at all. Students sense the insignificance and observe the arts being a minor subject in the curriculum. This leads to a disinterest in art and regarding it as a low priority in their education. The belief that art is only for the talented was also found to be a reason for poor attitudes and achievement.

Only For the Talented

Many students believe they "cannot draw" and presume that artistic talent is not tangible. They are convinced that only a small number of people are artistic. "Few of us, after all, grow up to be professional artists" (Gaines, 1999, p. 58). Many assume art cannot be taught. They feel a child must have inborn talent. In fact, children are often separated into "talented " and "untalented" categories. Because of this fallacy, Davis states, "Most individuals stop drawing after middle childhood. It is only the artistically persistent...who seem to ascend in their development" (as cited in Kindler, 1998, p. 2). Student survey results coincides with this research as shown in Table 9.

Table 9

Student Survey Question 4

	Yes	No
I am confident artistically. (good at drawing, painting, etc.)	9	13

Analysis of the survey question indicates 59% of students in the art class are not confident in their artistic abilities. When students feel they have no talent and cannot learn because they are not "artistic", they fail to try. Often they give little effort in the assignment, hurry through the lesson or turn it in incomplete, which is the case at the site.

As reported, the notion that art is only for the talented is a cause for poor student attitude and achievement. Another probable cause found, is that for many students, the subject is not relevant to them in their every day lives.

Subject Not Meaningful

Often, art is not meaningful or relevant to students. They do not see the connections and role that art plays in their lives. Consequently, students have little interest in the subject. Research by Gardner & Winner found a decline in student interest in art after the ages of seven and eight (as cited in Kindler, 1998). Evidence is found in analyzing question 2 of the student survey, which asks students if they see the significance of art. See Table 10.

Table 10

Student Survey Question 2

	Yes	No
I see the significance of art.	10	12

Analysis of the survey question indicates 55% of students in the art class do not see the importance or role that art places in their lives. They do not see a significance. When students feel the subject has no meaning for them and cannot see relevance in the assignment, they have little interest in completing it to the best of their ability. Again, they give little effort, hurry through the lesson or turn it in incomplete, which shows their poor attitudes and disinterest.

Research has shown several causes for student's poor attitudes and disinterest in art. These include; students considering it a minor subject, they feel it is only for the talented and the subject is not meaningful to them. Further research will explore several solutions to the problem.

CHAPTER 3
THE SOLUTION STRATEGY
Literature Review

The topics for discussion that have been found to be solutions for students who exhibit a disinterest in art and consider it a low priority in their education include; create professional displays, communicate art is not only for the talented, make assignments meaningful, streamline and coordinate curriculum and instruction, develop portfolios, establish after school art activities and gather community support.

Create Displays

It is important to make children feel like an artist and that time spent on their project was worthwhile. According to Higginson, "Students take greater pride in their artwork and relish the feedback they get" ("A Glorious Gallery," 1999, p. 36). It shows what they do in art class is important. The authentic artistic experience should resemble as closely as possible, the practice that professional artists use to make quality products (Giles, 1999, p.1). The best way to do this is to mat their artwork and according to Stasny, "Try to make art more like a professional experience" (as cited in Spencer, 1998, p. 1). He also suggests holding formal receptions when displaying student work. Various displays and activities should be going on at the school at all times (Greer & Silverman, 1988), and artwork should be changed often, in order to give many students a chance to have their projects exhibited. Art should be shown throughout the halls and students should see it constantly. "Bombard them visually" (Hill, 1999, p. 9).

Higginson suggests establishing a professional art gallery to have a secure and distinguished area to display student artwork (as cited in "The Glorious Gallery," 1999). When students see their work is important enough to be treated professionally, it has a

better chance of getting home safely, treated with respect and improves their attitude towards art. "Success breeds success" (Rufer et al., 1998, p. 51). It must be emphasized that the area for displaying student work must be secure. Often, artwork in the hallway that is unprotected, can easily be vandalized or stolen. Utmost security procedure should be given when projects are displayed. This means placing artwork in locked glass cases, out of arms reach or in an office or well patrolled area. Along with creating displays, it is necessary to communicate the fact that art is not only for the talented.

Communicate That Art Is Not Only For the Talented

There is a misconception in schools that art is only for the talented and just those that wish to take it, should be exposed to it. This notion has been proven to be false.

> It is simply not true that only a small number of people have creative talents. We all do. We need to hammer these facts into the minds of students. Then, we must develop a third eye and a third ear so that we can see and hear the creativity of students when it begins to happen. If we don't, we will not be there to nurture it. (DeBruyn, 1998, p. 2)

Students need to be shown that the arts are part of a well rounded education and not just for artists, because "...Chemistry classes don't necessarily make students chemists, either" (Kupferberg, 1999, p. 5).

Another suggestion is to talk about art constantly in all classrooms. This can be done in English, Social Studies, Science and Math class. The art teacher should take a proactive role and work collaboratively with teachers in other curricular areas to show where connections are and to suggest teachers take an opportunity to talk about the arts whenever they can. According to Eisner, "Ideally, the arts should be taught in relation to other subjects. In the best possible worlds, each of the arts would be taught in a way that allows for parity between subjects" (Brandt, 1988, p. 9). An example on how to do this is in a team teaching approach. The social studies teacher can work hand in hand with the art teacher when preparing lessons on immigration. Studies can be done on a student's own nationality and heritage and they can create a collage using the country's flag and symbols, as well as, interests of the student. Students should be aware of how art impacts all of their lives, connects with other subjects and how it is linked with important social and personal

issues. "Words alone can lift the arts from the status of recreation to that of important work" (Gaines, 1999, p. 62). According to Fowler,

> Teachers need to communicate to students that life is full of the arts, concerts, movies, architecture, etc. Giving students exposure to art ...educating them about interpreting our society. We do not need more and better arts education to develop more and better artists...we need more and better arts education to produce better educated human beings (as cited in Allen et al., 1998, p. 38).

All students, not just a talented few, are able to learn through art. It is the teacher's job to communicate this to students. National assessment confirms that the arts can be taught and the more art instruction they acquire, the more creative they become (Day, 1998). Students need to become aware of this fact.

> We must teach students that creativity can be both tangible and controllable. It is not hair-brained notions or off-the-wall thinking. If we use regular brainstorming sessions in class for academic material, decision making and problem solving issues, students will see that creativity can be concrete. Remember, free and easy discussion that requires give and take about any subject can tap student creativity. One of the best ways to tap creativity is to talk and listen to others. Share a goal or a problem. Ask others what they would do, but don't turn off your own brain. Rather, use the brains of others to activate your own. (DeBruyn, 1998, p. 2)

Fears that many students have that they "cannot draw" or are non artistic will be lessened. This can be done by having them critique another student's work. A P.M.I. (positive, minus, interesting) would be handed out to students grouped in pairs (Burke, 1999). An artwork would be given to them from a previous quarters class. Students would peer critique the anonymous students work, recording positives, negatives and interesting aspects of the artwork. Finding out that peers found success with the same assignment can make it seem less threatening. Once that barrier is broken, student confidence in art should increase. Another way is to use the example of music. Students can relate to the fact that no one is born knowing how to play a musical instrument, but they must be introduced to it, enjoy it and practice often to become better. This is also true of sports. Again, no one is born

knowing how to play a particular sport. It takes commitment and practice to become better. The same is true with art. The more instruction students have, the more they enjoy it and their skills will increase. Besides communicating art is not only for the talented, another solution is to develop art assignments that are meaningful and relevant to students.

Make Assignments Meaningful

Teachers need to gear assignments to be meaningful and relevant for students in order to get them excited and motivated. "A meaningful art experience is an experience for which a child has intensity and purpose. One example of a meaningful example is when students enjoy an activity with intensity and have a personal purpose for the activity (Giles, 1999, p.1). These activities need to first, be "Learning experiences that encourage imagination, creative, flexible thought" (Berry, 1998, p. 30) and lessons that, "Focus on individual student needs" (Rufer et al., 1998, p. 51). Finding out what students are interested in, is of utmost importance if assignments are going to be meaningful. "One of the most effective motivational techniques is the *me button technique*. You need to know what interests your students, what appeals to them and what interests/benefits they find hard to resist" (DeBruyn, 1998, p.1). This is difficult when students are not seen frequently. Teachers must have the opportunity to get to know students in order to find out what interests them. "The challenge is to provide educational opportunities that promote student understanding and continued learning, and to develop assessment methods that provide useful feedback to students, parents and teachers" (Allen et al., 1998, p. 4). Especially in art compositions, it is important to have students interested in the task and to show relevance. Students need freedom to interpret and make meaning of the assignment (Migra, personal communication, June 28, 1999).

This can be done in a collage drawing assignment using student self portraits, favorite hobbies, music group logos and letters of their names. A scenic painting assignment can revolve around a favorite place the student has gone or wishes to go on vacation. Pottery decorative pieces can have themes students choose from their ancestry.

It is also important to explain to students that success on their art projects affects learning in other areas. "Success in the arts became a bridge of learning and eventual success in other areas of learning" (Grossman & Leroux, 1999, p. 28). An assessment tool, such as a

transfer journal, can be used to take an art assignment students have done and help them apply or transfer the idea to another subject or aspect of their life (Burke, 1999). Art can be used beyond the classroom setting. According to Armstrong, "Although I.Q. tests predict school success, they fail to indicate how students will do when they get out in the real world" (Hamburg, 1998, p. 8). Many students believe exposure to the four "R's" is enough for future success. It is not.

> Experiences learned through arts education also, stimulate imagination and foster creativity that leads to innovation and change, characteristics that business needs. Companies like Sony, Toyota, Microsoft and Hallmark, are encouraging and nurturing employees creativity and innovation by providing hands-on seminar and encouraging exposure to the arts. (Gurin, 1998, p. 32)

It is the teachers job to help students become aware of the significant role art plays in many different professions. "Sometimes it is better not to give customers what they want but, rather, to help them understand what they ought to want" (Eisner, 1998, p.15). Exposure to academics is not enough for future success. Students should be shown they need the arts to stimulate their creativity and thought. Ideally, this can be done by teachers emphasizing and requiring the need for written reflection of ideas for projects outside of class. Students should also discuss assignments and brainstorm ideas. Critiquing previous students projects using a P.M.I. format can help those who are at a loss for ideas. In addition to developing art assignments that are meaningful and relevant, another solution is to streamline and coordinate curriculum and instruction.

Streamline and Coordinate Curriculum and Instruction

In order to make the subject matter more significant to students, several suggestions have been documented in the areas of curriculum and instruction. One recommendation is to write curriculum guides for each grade level (Brickell, Jones & Runyan, 1988). This means mapping particular skills students in the art class should master. The importance in streamlining and coordinating art curriculum cannot be stressed enough. Lessons should be progressive, developmental and sequential (Wilson, 1997). According to Eisner, it is a necessity to have more purpose and continuity in the art curriculum. Instruction needs to

be organized and successive, however, "The challenge is to provide educational opportunities that promote student understanding and continued learning, and to develop assessment methods that provide useful feedback to students, parents and teachers" (as cited in Allen et al., 1998, p. 38). This can be accomplished by finding out what art experiences students have had previously and build on them. An example of this is drawing. If the year before, simple perspective was introduced, a lesson on aerial perspective or two point perspective can be given. In pottery, if the slab technique was presented, the following year an assignment can entail a combination of slab and coil techniques or adding handles or decorative designs. In relation to coordinating art experiences during the same year, using a social studies time line or themes is a possibility. This means the first art experience can be revolve around the 1880's and Impressionism, with student assignments integrated with that theme. The second part of the year, the 1910's could be discussed, using the Fauve or Cubistic periods. The following unit could be related to the 1930's and the Ashcan School with projects associated to that theme. Finally, the last part of the year can be dedicated to the 1960's and Pop Art.

Another idea is to integrate art into other subject areas. Art teachers should take opportunities to collaborate with teachers from other disciplines (Berry, 1998). "Projects are related, not isolated" (Wilson, 1997, p. 18). Meetings between teachers can be held weekly during common planning times or before or after school. Integration allows students to see connections and helps them make educational sense of the world. "Planning among faculty...affords students an opportunity to connect what they learn from one subject to another" (Floyd, 1999, p. 2). This does not mean that one subject should dictate the curriculum. All should be of equal importance. One example of this could be a unit on Impressionism. The time period, famous people, dates and historical significance can be discussed in Social Studies, as well as, scientific breakthroughs from that era. Students can study famous writers from the late 1800's, study famous Impressionist artists and do reports on their lives. Oral presentations can be given. Students can then study the Impressionist art and using their own ideas and landscapes from vacations or places they would like to visit and paint their own painting on canvas in the Impressionistic style. One

major pitfall to this idea is the argument that student creativity is stifled by integrated subject matter and historical themes. Many believe that the charm and beauty of art, is artists finding their own style in self chosen themes. Students often want release from the rigor of the school day to just create. Along with creating and developing art assignments that are meaningful and relevant, it is necessary to have students develop and maintain portfolios.

Develop Portfolios

Another recommendation is to have students develop portfolios. In producing portfolios, students gain an insight into what they have learned throughout the year. By collecting works of art they produced during the year, students "Record a long term evaluation of artistic thinking" (Wolf, 1988, p. 26). Portfolios should be started at the beginning of the year and continue to be added to throughout the year. The portfolio should include 2-D artwork, digital photographs of all 3-D assignments and rubric grade sheets with reflections. A Portfolio Day is a good way to conclude the end of the year. Students give oral presentations showing their best work and critique their portfolios. In order to develop a portfolio, it is important that works stay in the classroom until the end of the year, in order to show student growth. The three basic steps involved in a portfolio are collect, select and reflect (Burke, 1997). It is necessary to have descriptions and reactions from students about the work in the portfolio. This can be done in written form with the use of reflective stems, such as, "This piece was my greatest challenge because...". A drawback in developing portfolios is the fact that many students insist on immediately taking their artwork home to show their parents, hang in their home or give as a gift. This can be remedied by taking digital photos or scanning the student's works and then placing the copy in the portfolio. This is also a good way to present three dimensional work. Another idea involves students writing a mirror page describing the piece and reflecting or reacting to it (Burke, 1999). Besides developing portfolios, another solution is to establish after school art activities.

After School Activities

According to Stasny, in order to promote art in school, it has been suggested to enhance the program with after school art activities (as cited in Spencer, 1998). This allows students who have the desire to have additional opportunities pursuing artistic endeavors, which in

time will encourage others to join and improve the status of the program. This can include an after school art club or school beautification class, which has been a part of after school activities at the site for the past five years. Students design permanent artwork to enhance the building. Students volunteer to be in a school enhancement club and meet after school in the art room to design ideas for murals, sculptures, pennants or flags. This has be done once a week for 60 to 90 minutes. An after school art club is another possibility. Students would meet for the same period of time, but would pay a fee for the club for the materials that they use, since it is for projects which would be taken home (Anderson, personal communication, November 16, 1999). They can explore an art material further or could spend extra time on perfecting a skill, such as the potter's wheel. Larger size paintings or projects such as metal enameling can be introduced because of the smaller number of students. Additionally, community support is needed for improvement.

Community Support

A final solution is to gain community support in the school district. This can be done several ways. Greer & Silverman (1988) suggest an Inservice in the arts for colleagues. By involving fellow teachers, they may find new insights and see opportunities for learning they can pass on to students. Knowledge and participation in the arts promotes the arts. This could range from an after school introduction to the potter's wheel to a computer graphics inservice. The art teacher can schedule workshops before or after school and on a sign up basis for those teachers who are interested (Irvine,1999). Having teachers try student activities or assignments can give an increase awareness of art and will benefit when classes are integrated or team teaching is involved. When team teaching with the art teacher, academic teachers often feel out of their element and are fearful about giving students wrong advice. In attending workshops, the academic teacher will become aware of problems students encounter and can assist them without hesitation. Artistic confidence will improve and they will be able answer student questions more readily, since having attempted the project themselves (Firnbach, personal communication, October 5, 1999).

Communication to parents describing learning in the art program is also critical. "Give parents information on the importance of the arts at parent meetings, newsletters and in written comments accompanying student exhibitions" (Day,1998, p. 3). Parents need to

be shown what opportunities exist for their children in relation to learning, participation and the purpose for art education. This can be done with art newsletters, an art addition to the school's web site, complete with photos of student projects, lesson explanations and updates in weekly school newsletters. Another idea is to set up displays at PTO meetings with explanations of the assignments. This can also include a description of the art program at school Open Houses. "Communication to all constituents what the program is about and why the mission is important, is a continued challenge" (Allen et al., 1998, p. 16). Educating parents this way, may influence their child's interest in art, giving it a higher priority in their education. A major problem with the suggested ideas is the time factor. It takes time to plan workshops, write newsletters, attend meetings and set up displays in addition to the art teacher's class schedule, grading, school committees, teacher meetings and endless duties. It is important to remember that the status of the art program is up to the art teacher. Many ideas are available, but those chosen to improve a program must be carried out with professionalism and integrity. Those strategies selected should be the most beneficial in improving student attitudes towards art. In addition, time, facility, space, resources and budgeted money are factors to consider when deciding on specific ideas. For these reasons, the strategies chosen for use at the site are: mat student artwork, establish an art gallery, communicate to students that art is not only for the talented, develop meaningful assignments, student portfolios and an Open House presentation.

Project Objectives and Processes

As a result of the use of strategies to promote the art program, during the period of September, 1999 through January, 2000, the targeted 8th grade students will show improvement in attitudes and interest in art. This will be measured by teacher anecdotal records and observation checklists, records of missing and incomplete assignments, student surveys, student reflections and rubrics.

In order to accomplish the objective, the following processes are necessary:

1. Mat student artwork. Try to make art more like a professional experience.
2. Establish an art gallery and prominently display artwork done by students.
3. Communicate to students that art is not only for the talented.
4. Develop meaningful and relevant assignments.

5. Have students develop a portfolio.
6. Present a description of program to parents at Open House.

Project Action Plan

1. Mat student artwork. Try to make art more like a professional experience.

This process will begin September, 1999 and continue throughout the year. Mats will be ordered through the art budget and a local frame shop will be contacted, in order to have scrap mat boards and frames donated to the school. Students in the targeted group will decide which pieces they wish to have matted and will know this at the beginning of the school year. Emphasis to the importance of the artwork will be given, thus improving the quality.

2. Establish an art gallery and prominently display artwork done by students.

A new building is currently being built at the site and included in this is an art gallery. A gallery will be establish in September/ October of 1999 and student artwork will be displayed professionally in frames. Student work will be selected by the teacher and will be determined by following assignment criteria and overall quality. Permission will first be obtained from the student in order to hang the work publicly. Students will receive congratulatory letters to take home to parents informing them that their child's work was chosen to be displayed. The displays will be change every two weeks, in order to give more students a chance to have their work shown.

3. Communicate to students that art is not only for the talented.

This process will be developed through discussion and an activity during the first day of class, September, 1999. Class discussions concerning this topic will occur at the beginning of the 55 minute period and last 15 minutes. Students will work in cooperative groups during the remaining 40 minutes of class, in order to complete an activity on the Principles of Art.

4. Develop meaningful and relevant assignments.

In the summer 1999, learning experiences will be developed that encourage creativity and imagination. The need for reflection outside of class will emphasize, in order to have the best creative innovation. During the second day of class, a 30 minute slide presentation, integrating Social Studies and Language Arts will be given at the beginning of

class. After the project has been introduced, students will discuss the projects and brainstorm ideas. They will also critique previous students projects using a P.M.I. format. This will help those who are at a loss for ideas.

5. Have students develop a portfolio.

Starting in September, 1999, students will develop a portfolio, in order to show them the growth that they have made over the school year. The portfolio will include 2-D artwork and digital photographs of all 3-D assignments, self assessed rubric grade sheets and reflections. A Portfolio Day will occur in May of 2000, where students will give an oral presentation and critique their portfolios during the 55 minute period.

6. Present a description of program to parents at Open House.

A presentation to parents describing the art program in the Junior High, will occur at the September 8, 1999 Open House. This will include a description of learning in the program, as well as, giving parents information on the importance of the arts. If the same format is used as in previous years, two presentations will be given, 7:30-7:50 and 8:20-8:40. The approximate time for the art presentation will be seven minutes. This may also include a slide presentation. As a result of the above strategies, several methods of assessment have been chosen to see if attitudes and achievement have improved.

Methods of Assessment

In order to determine the effects of the interventions attempted, students will repeat the art survey to determine if attitudes and achievement have improved. Also, students will complete a self evaluated rubric, reflection and checklist. A teacher observation journal will be used in the assessment process, noting student effort and comments. Information such as, missing and late assignments will be gathered by teacher records.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The objective of this project was to improve attitudes and achievement in art. Selected strategies to effect the desired changes were: mat student artwork, establish an art gallery, communicate to students that art is not only for the talented, develop meaningful assignments, have students establish and maintain portfolios and give an Open House presentation to parents.

Mat Student Artwork

In order to improve student attitudes and achievement in art, one strategy was to mat student two dimensional work. Mats were obtained from a local frame store that donated scrap and slightly damaged mats. Approximately $300.00 worth of mats were donated to the school on a total of six separate occasions during the year, from June 1999 until January 2000. A thank you letter (Appendix E) was written in December, in order to thank the establishment for their generous donations. Also, $300.00 was earmarked from the art budget to purchase mats for the purpose of matting student artwork during the year. Mats were cut and taped to student artwork before and after school and during planning periods. Each student in the research group was encouraged to have their two dimensional work matted, but the final decision to have it done was theirs. Students selected the mat color which would best enhance their piece after completion of the project. Frames were also donated to the site by a local establishment. Frames worth approximately $400.00, were given to the school between the months of July 1999 and January of 2000. In addition, $200.00 of the art budget was used to purchase frames for displaying student artwork. Another plan which was implemented at the site was the establishment of an art gallery.

Establish an Art Gallery

The strategy of establishing a professional art gallery was first proposed to the architects in January of 1997. The plan was approved by the school board and added to the design plan of the new building. As the construction of the new school progressed, it was evident that building was behind schedule. Trades hurried to complete the project by August 1999. As it turned out, the building passed inspection, but areas were not completed at the start of the school year. Many items were left unfinished. An attempt was made to display some paintings at the entryway of the school on bulletin boards. Unfortunately, the paintings were knocked down and names were removed by passing students. Once the display areas were secured with glass, student artwork could be safely displayed. The art gallery, which included glass shelving and lockable glass doors, was not completed until the middle of November, 1999. Initially, five cases were used to display seventh and eighth grade projects. These included two borrowed from the music department, since they were not yet ready to place their own items in the cases. After January 2000, four display cases were used specifically for the art gallery. Congratulatory letters (Appendix F) were sent home with students, notifying them and their parents that their artwork would be shown in the display cases for two weeks. The letters were typed on school stationery and sent to the student in their morning homeroom period. A special display was put up November 8, 1999, in honor of two retiring board members. Each of the five schools in the district sent over 10 to 15 works of artwork for the display. The exhibit took place in the schools music suite and works were displayed on eight, 4' X 6' panels. Congratulatory letters were sent to exhibiting students letting them know that their work would be on display and inviting them to the meeting. Works of art from 287 students were shown in the art galleries between October 1, 1999 and January 31, 2000.

Another idea that was carried out was to have a continuous display in the superintendent's office. The superintendent volunteered to purchase frames if the art teachers would choose student artwork to hang in the "gallery" after a meeting in October, 1999. One frame would be available for each of the five schools. Frames were ordered and delivered approximately three weeks later. The first show case took place November, 1999. The pieces were changed every month and a congratulatory letter was sent home to

the student whose work was exhibited, letting them know that their work would be on display. Besides establishing art galleries, a strategy implemented was communicating to students that art is not only for the talented.

Communicate to Students That Art is Not Only for the Talented

A class discussion took place on the second day of class, September 18, 1999. Students were asked if they thought artistic skill was inborn or needed to be developed, or a combination of both. The discussion in each class averaged about 15 minutes. Additional time was spent throughout the rotation, reemphasizing key comments from the initial discussion. Also, previous student projects were critiqued during each class period for 10 minutes using a P.M.I. format (Burke, 1999). Students analyzed an anonymous student's work from the same grade level, listing positive, negative and interesting points about the piece. There were small group discussions where students orally shared their critiques. Finally, a rubric was developed, which was a combination of key criteria for the project along with a students reflection sheet. Students were given this sheet as the project was assigned, in order for them to see requirements. An additional strategy was to develop meaningful assignments for students.

Develop Meaningful Assignments

In the summer of 1999, the rewriting of several eighth grade assignments was done, in order to make them more meaningful to students. Finding ways of incorporating student likes, dislikes and interests into the assignments was the emphasis. Also, an attempt was made to keep the projects general, so that students would have more of a chance to creatively interpret the assignments. An example of this was the "Me" drawing assignment (Appendix G). Students were given seven different choices of likes and interests from several different avenues. In addition to the flag of their family's origin, they could choose a self portrait, their name in bubble letters, favorite flower, means of transportation, object and food or candy. The acrylic painting and computer graphic assignment (Appendix H) involved students bringing in favorite scenic photos from vacations or places they would like to go, as a basis for an Impressionistic painting. The pottery composition involved students constructing a pot on the potter's wheel and choosing a design from their own nationality and embellishing the piece using the mishima technique (Appendix I). The

process involves scratching leather hard clay with a sharp instrument and inlaying contrasting clay. In addition to the development of meaningful assignments, students were to establish and maintain portfolios.

Have Students Establish and Maintain Portfolios

Student art portfolios were started the second day of class, September 21, 1999. Students were directed to write their names creatively on the 18" X 24" tag board envelope and if time allowed, draw likes and dislikes on the cover. The purpose for keeping a portfolio was discussed and several students mentioned that they have kept portfolios in other classes. They were then collected and shelved in the store room until their works could be added. Unfortunately, an overhead pipe in the art storage room burst on January 21, 2000. At approximately 1:40 scalding water began pouring out of the ceiling and onto items being stored in the art room. Approximately 15 student projects, which were on a desk in the room waiting to be matted, were destroyed. Student pieces were not yet in their portfolios, because they had just been exhibited and were being stored on a distant shelf. Continuation of the concept to have students show and reflect in the form of a presentation at the end of the school year was still being planned. Another solution chosen at the site was to improve community support by giving an Open House presentation to parents.

Give an Open House Presentation to Parents

A presentation was prepared to give to parents at the September 8, 1999, Open House, (Appendix J). There were two presentations, the first for seventh grade parents (7:30-7:50) and the second for eighth grade parents (8:20-8:40). Time allotted for the art presentation was approximately five to seven minutes, since the music, industrial technology and consumer technology departments needed to talk about their programs. A microphone and podium were set up in the room prior to the evenings event. A description of learning in the art program was given, as well as, reaffirming the importance of the arts to parents. An explanation of the art curriculum, as well as, the integration with social studies and language arts was given. The presentations were given in the newly constructed cafeteria with approximately two hundred people at each of the presentations. The sound quality of the room was poor because of the metal roof, tile floor and concrete

walls, which made sounds echo. A microphone and podium were set up in the room prior to the evenings event. A question/answer period was given at the end of the entire arts and technology presentation. Besides speaking at the Open House presentation, an additional idea, which was not an initial strategy, was to offer a workshop to teachers at the site.

Teacher Workshop

A potter's wheel workshop was offered to staff members at the site. An invitation (Appendix K) was sent to all staff at the site on December 7, 1999 and responses were due back by December 16, 1999. The first workshop was held on January 7, 2000, from 2:15-4:00.

The results of the strategies: matting student artwork, establishing an art gallery, communicating to students that art is not only for the talented, developing meaningful assignments, having students establish and maintain portfolios, giving a teacher workshop and delivering an open house presentation to parents, will be presented and analyzed.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

In order to assess the effects of the strategies to improve student attitudes and achievement in art, student surveys, teacher journal records, checklists and student reflections were used in gathering data at the site.

Student Surveys

In order to assess the effects of the intervention, the same student survey was given in December 17, 1999, on the last day of class of the second rotation. In the student survey, the first question asked students if art was an important subject in their education. The results are shown in Table 11.

Table 11

Student Survey Question 1

	Survey 1		Survey 2	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Art is an important subject in my education.	10	12	13	9

Analysis of the survey question asking whether or not art is an important subject in their education, indicates an 8% increase of students feeling art is an important subject in the curriculum, after the intervention.

Question 2 of the student survey, asks students if they see the significance of art. See Table 12.

Table 12

Student Survey Question 2

	Survey 1		Survey 2	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
I see the significance of art.	10	12	19	3

Analysis of the survey question indicates 86% of students in the art class see the importance or role that art places in their lives, as opposed to 45% from September, 1999. This indicates a 41% increase in those students that now see the significance that art plays.

Question three of the student survey asked if students have found ways of using art in their lives. See Table 13.

Table 13

Student Survey Question 3

	Survey 1		Survey 2	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
I have found ways of using art in my life	17	5	19	3

Analysis of the survey question indicates 86% of students in the class have found ways of using art in their everyday life, from the strategies implemented in the research. This data shows a 9% increase from September of 1999.

Question four of the student survey asked if students were confident artistically. Results are shown in Table 14. Analysis of the survey question indicates that there was no change in students artistic confidence.

Table 14

Student Survey Question 4

	Survey 1		Survey 2	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
I am confident artistically. (good at drawing, painting, etc.).	9	13	9	13

Question nine of the student survey asked if students ever thought about their projects outside of class. Results are shown in Table 15.

Table 15

Student Survey Question 9

	Survey 1		Survey 2	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Have you ever thought about your art project. (reflected) outside of class?	10	12	12	10

Analysis of the survey question indicates a 10% increase of students in the art class said they thought about their projects outside of class. Additional data is found in teacher anecdotal records.

Teacher Anecdotal Records

Teacher anecdotal records show that 100% of the students from the test group chose to have their two dimensional projects matted. Students selected the mat color and the mats were cut by the next class period. Teacher anecdotal records show that students asked 34 times if their work could be displayed in the showcases, and if so, when they would be up. Table 16 shows teacher journal records of student work taken from the research group from September, 1999 until December 1999. Records show that 99% of the research class turned their projects in on time.

Table 16

Completed Student Work

	Number of Students	Late Projects	Missing projects	Projects turned in on time
1998	28	7	1	20
1999	26	1	0	25

Analysis of the records of student work indicate from September to December, 1999, 2% of the students had late or missing projects as opposed to 28.6% a year ago. The student who had late work during the research period, was ill for two days during the art rotation and was a member of the band, which meant he had no study halls. He had a difficult time finding time to make up the work. The project was eventually completed after school. Besides teacher records, student checklists were used in showing that attitudes and achievement in art had increased at the site.

Student Behavioral Checklist

A student checklist was given and filled out by students during the last day of class, of the second rotation in December 1999. Each of the 22 students worked on two projects. Students were asked what was to become of the projects once they got home. The results are shown in Table 17.

Table 17

What Happened To My Artwork Checklist

Year	Total Student Projects	Threw Away	Saved
1998	66	33	33
1999	33	0	33

Data analysis from the behavioral checklist indicates that 100% of all projects made by students in art class will be kept by students. This was a 50% increase from the same students, one year ago. In addition to behavioral checklists, student reflections were

implemented at the targeted site.

Student Reflections

Students in the research group at the site filled out self critiques when projects were completed. This also entailed a self reflection section at the end of the critique. Records show that 97% of the comments were positive. Comments ranged from, "I didn't know I could do this," to, "I had a wonderful time working on the potter's wheel and want to try again". Comments of "feeling rushed," were most often written in the area where students needed help. Several conclusions and recommendations can be drawn from the research.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the presentation and analysis of data, the intervention was successful at the site. The first strategy was to have student artwork matted.

Mat Student Artwork

All of the students from the targeted group chose to have their two dimensional works matted. This shows that students were proud of their accomplishments and in turn, wanted to see their pieces treated in a professional manner. Many were so eager to have this done, they wanted the mats cut immediately during class, so they could see the end result. The increase in the number of projects that were taken home was due to the strategy of presenting the artwork professionally in mats and in frames, as well as, having the pieces displayed. Students sense this significance and mentioned how proud they were of their accomplishments. Recommendations for continued success in improving student attitudes and achievement in art include the continuation of matting and showing student artwork in a professional manner. Another successful strategy was to establish an art gallery at the site.

Establish an Art Gallery

Students were eager to have their pieces displayed prominently in the newly established art galleries. The belief that art is an important subject in the education increased. A higher percentage of students saw the importance art plays in their lives. It is necessary for students to see what they have created was worthwhile. Teacher anecdotal records show that students asked 34 times if their work could be displayed in the showcases, and if so, when they would be up. This shows that students were excited about having their artwork displayed for others to see. Students were extremely proud

and honored to have their work displayed. Several students were seen showing their artwork in the display cases to their friends, who in turn wanted to know when their work would go up. "Hanging student artwork on bulletin boards is a thing of the past..." ("A Glorious Gallery," 1999, p. 36). Student projects should be treated in a professional manner and exhibited as professionally as possible. Besides establishing an art gallery, another strategy was to communicate to students that art is not only for the talented.

Communicate to Students That Art is Not Only for the Talented.

Discussions communicating that art is not only for the talented should be a recurring topic in class. Students need to be shown that they have the ability to improve artistically. "Students need not feel they are 'creative dead' if they haven't been taught how to use their creative minds...free and easy discussion that requires give and take about any subject can tap student creativity" (DeBruyn, 1998, p. 1). There should be continual analysis of how art impacts and is linked to other aspects of their lives. Research data indicated that there was no change in the area of artistic confidence. The conclusion drawn is that artistic confidence is hard to change. Being sure of ones self artistically, takes longer than three months to develop. Continuation of emphasizing that art may be hard for them but, "That is the very reason you need to do it. You need a bigger challenge and achieve at a higher level than you think you can" (DeBruyn, 1998, p. 2). Students need to be shown they can go beyond where they think they can go. "Turn the student's reason why they shouldn't do something into reasons they should" (DeBruyn, 1998, p. 2). Developing meaningful assignments was another strategy implemented at the site.

Develop Meaningful and Relevant Assignments.

There should be continual analysis of how art impacts and is linked to other aspects of their lives. Assignments should include social and personal issues and be authentic and relevant to students (Ulbricht, 1998). Meaningful assignments which are pertinent, in order to get students excited and motivated, should be developed. Written reflections, critiques and the P.M.I. technique should be repeated, in order to stimulate creative thought. "Reflection can serve as a way for students to learn more about things that are already known in some sense, but also know them in deeper, more meaningful ways" (Susi, 1999, p.1). Quality of the artwork increased because students thought about their projects and

entered the class with a plan, knowing what course of action they would follow. A larger number of students reflected about their projects when they were outside of the classroom setting. Students in the research group began to see connections and the role art plays in their lives. More students in the test group saw the significance of art. When students feel art has meaning for them and see relevance in the assignment, they have interest in finishing the work to the best of their ability. They give their best effort and care in completion of the piece, which shows their improved attitudes and interest. The amount of missing and late work was reduced substantially and there was a 50% increase in the number of saved projects by the targeted class, which showed improved attitudes and achievement. An additional strategy was to have students develop portfolios.

Have Students Develop a Portfolio.

The idea of maintaining portfolios is a wonderful way of showing student growth. The chronologically sequenced collection of work records students artistic growth over the year and gives insight into the student's abilities (Wolf, 1988). Keeping student pieces until the end of the year can be chancy. It is difficult to store large paintings, drawings and sculptures for 750 students. It is recommended to take digital pictures of the pieces. This is a safe, easy way to document work in a portfolio. The data can be kept on a Super Disc or can be printed on typing paper and easily filed as portfolios. The concept to have students show and reflect in the form of a presentation at the end of the school year should still be planned. Another suggestion is to communicate to parents what the art program is about and why the mission is important.

Present a Description of Program to Parents at Open House.

After the Open House program, parents came and had positive comments regarding the presentation, which showed support of the art program. It is recommended to inform parents and to promote the program by describing and accessing learning in art (Day, 1998). It is suggested there be a strong community investment and support in the arts. Community involvement is a necessary step, as art is important for the community (Rufer et al., 1998). An additional strategy of offering a pottery workshop, was implemented at the site.

Pottery Workshop

The strategy of starting a pottery workshop for teachers was extremely successful and the length of the time increased to almost two hours. Teachers began coming in extra and sent e-mails and cards saying how much they enjoyed the time spent in the art activity. They also noted how much they anticipated coming to the art room every Friday. For many, they said it was the highlight of their week. An inservice for colleagues and conducting a variety of activities and events are approaches in promoting the arts (Greer & Silverman, 1988). After school workshops for teachers is an excellent way to gain support for the art program within the school and creates advocates for the arts. The art curriculum is promoted by giving staff members an increased awareness of art and improving their artistic confidence. This directly affects their comfort levels and they become much more at ease when assisting students in the art classroom. While the strategies above improved attitudes and achievement in art, there were strengths and weakness of the study.

The study's strength came from the students themselves. They were cooperative, anxious and willing. Few discipline problems occurred since the fact added surveys, checklists and reflections kept them busy throughout the study.

Study weakness involved the fact that students were seen only hourly for seven consecutive days, three times a year. It was difficult getting to know students and when a relationship was developed, students were gone to their next rotation. Also, the interval time in seeing the targeted class was almost three months. Students forgot key information and it was difficult for any carry over in the curriculum. The time factor also added to the "rushed feeling" many students commented on in their reflections. Many felt frustrated not having enough time during the seven day rotation to finish their projects to the extent they wanted. In addition to completing their projects, students in the targeted class had the added pressure of filling out forms in order to get research data for the study on ways to improve attitudes and achievement in art.

The goal of this research project was to improve attitudes and achievement in art within the targeted 8th grade art class. In order to achieve this goal, several strategies were implemented. These included; mat student artwork, establish a rotating art gallery, communicate art is not only for the talented, develop meaningful and relevant

assignments, have students develop portfolios and present an Open House program for parents. Based on the fact that art is considered a low priority subject nationwide, a plan such as this one could be implemented by art teachers in order to improve attitudes and achievement in art. This intervention has shown a wide range of research based instructional strategies that have had a positive impact. In conclusion, national interest and priority in art is low and it is often considered a secondary subject in the curriculum. Therefore, to effectively address this problem, it is important that educators create and use a variety of intervention strategies for improving student attitudes and achievement in art.

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APPENDIX A

FINAL CONSENT FORM

Dear Student & Parent,

I am presently participating in a Masters of Education program through St. Xavier University. As part of that requirement, I am to complete an Action Research project. Through my research, I intend to develop and implement ways to improve attitudes and achievement in art including, designing meaningful lessons, professionally displaying artwork and showing students the role art plays in their lives. This will be part of the regular curriculum.

In order to complete this project I need to obtain data to document any changes in attitudes and achievement in art. Data collection instruments include, student surveys and a checklist, teacher observations and records on project quality and the timely completion of projects. Data will be collected from September, 1999 until December 1999.

Participation in the study is voluntary and confidentiality will be maintained throughout the study. If you choose not to participate, you will still be involved in the regular curriculum, there will be no penalty and your grade will not be affected.

I appreciate your time. If you have any questions, feel free to call me at : **362-0553**

Mrs. Benton

____**Yes, I would** **o participate**

____**No, I would** **e to participate**

_____ _____

Paren

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APPENDIX B

ART SURVEY

ART SURVEY

42

This is a study to ask your opinions about art in order to improve the art class. Please take a moment to answer a few questions and return the questionnaire to your teacher. Thanks in advance for your help!

1. Art is an important subject in my education. Yes No

2. I see the significance of art. Yes No

3. I have found ways of using art in my life. Yes No

4. I am confident artistically (good at drawing, painting, etc.) Yes No

5. I am fearful or uncomfortable when asked to create something. Yes No

6. I would like to have had more time in art this year. Yes No

7. I keep most of the art projects that I make. Yes No

8. What grade do you get on most art projects? A B C D F

9. Have you ever thought about your art project (reflected) outside of class? Yes No

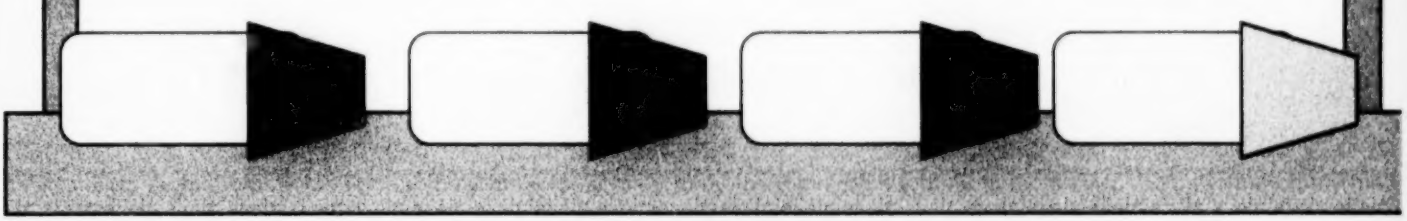
10 . Please add any comments that you may have on the lines below.

_____

_____

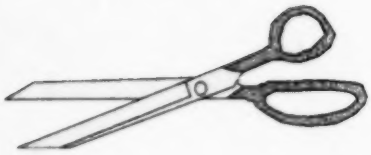
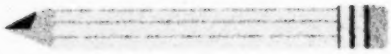
_____

_____



APPENDIX C

BEHAVIORAL CHECKLIST

"What Happened To My Artwork?" CHECKLIST

Project	I Threw Away	Saved	Saved and is in a place of prominence
1.			
2.			
3.			

Any comments regarding the artwork's location would be helpful:

APPENDIX D

RUBRIC/REFLECTION

Potter's Wheel Rubric

Concept	Needs additional help	developing	meets criteria	exceeds
1. wall thickness	1 very thick {> 1"}	2 thick {1/2" -1" thick}	3 somewhat thin 1/2"- 1/4 " thick	4 thin {1/4" or less}
2. shape	1 very lumpy or inconsistent	2 lumpy or inconsistent	3 somewhat consistent or smooth	4 consistent and smooth
3. design	1 none shown	2 little or inadequate	3 well designed	4 superior design
4. glaze	1 poorly glazed	2 somewhat poorly glazed	3 glazed well	4 perfectly glazed

Total points _____

14-16 = A

11-13 = B

7-10 = C

4-6 = D

Incomplete= F

Student Reflection Stems:

What I did well in this piece was _____

_____

This piece was a challenge because _____

_____

One thing that I will remember for next time is_____

_____

Teacher comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX E

THANK YOU LETTER

December 12, 1999

Dear Chris and Cheryl,

I just wanted to thank you again for the generous donation of mats and frames for our school's art department. The students are eager to have their work displayed and when they are enhanced by quality matting and frames, they are even more proud of their work.

Thank you for backing our art program,

Mary Benton

APPENDIX F

CONGRATULATORY LETTER

November 22, 1999

Congratulations Minnat,

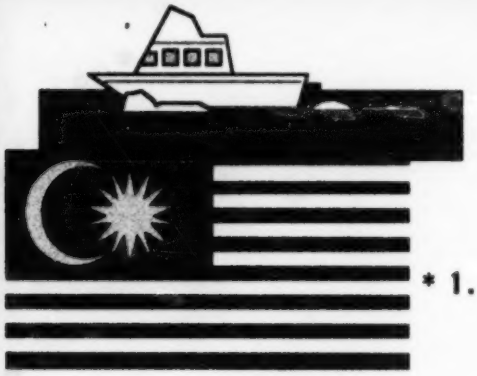
Your art work has been chosen to be displayed in the HJHS Art Gallery. The gallery is located outside of the art room and will be up for two weeks. Thank you for taking your time in composing such a wonderful piece.

Congratulations again!

Mrs. Benton

APPENDIX G

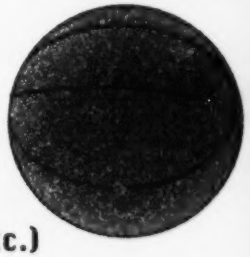
COMPOSITION COLLAGE



"Me" Composition Collage

* 1. Choose a symbol or flag of your nationality plus 4 more of the following:

2. favorite object of yours



3. favorite food or candy

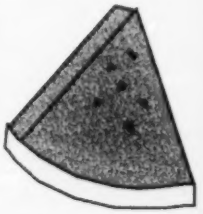
4. your name (bubble or block letters)

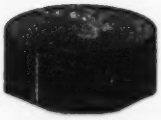
5. close up self portrait (eye, ear, mouth, etc.)

6. favorite transportation

7. favorite flower or plant life

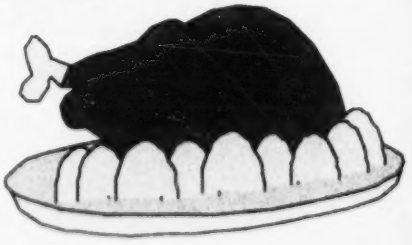
You are to combine these into an interesting arrangement and draw lightly on paper. Shade values in shapes using colored pencil, in order to show form.

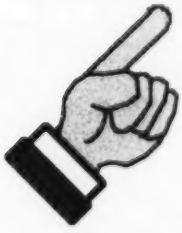


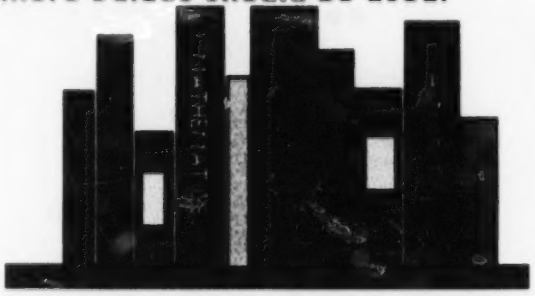


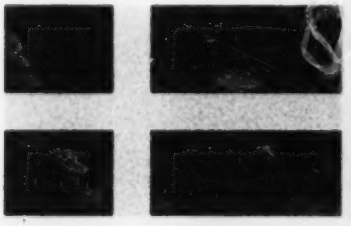
Requirements:

1. One object must be 50% of page.
2. One object must be repeated to show rhythm.
3. Lots of overlap.
4. Go off the page.
5. Change direction and proportion of objects.
6. 75% of paper must be filled.
7. Three or more values should be used.









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APPENDIX H

PAINTING/COMPUTER ASSIGNMENT

Impressionism/Post Impressionism

The group of painters, meeting in France from the 1860's to the 1890's were known as the Impressionists. The invention of photography had a great influence on painting. The Impressionists were also interested in light and color and did not use black for shadows. Shades were made up of complementary colors, placed close together on the canvas. Every day life, nature and subject matter photographed at unusual angles, became recurrent themes.

Post Impressionism came after the Impressionist movement, as the name implies. These artists became even more inventive and abstract. They used brilliant colors and thick dabs of paint. Themes were similar to Impressionists, but they also, often painted still life and everyday objects around them.

Pointillism is the technique of using small dots of color placed close together, which then mixes in your eye at a distance.

Your assignment is to decide on one of the following themes:

1. **Still life-** plants, common objects
2. **Nature scene -** from a family photograph
3. **People** doing ordinary things

Directions:

1. Make a light sketch with pencil
2. Begin painting using either the Impressionist style of strokes or pointillism
   - always working largest area first, smallest areas last.
3. Add any finishing details.
4. When completely dry, add a coat of gloss medium and brush lightly.

Requirements:

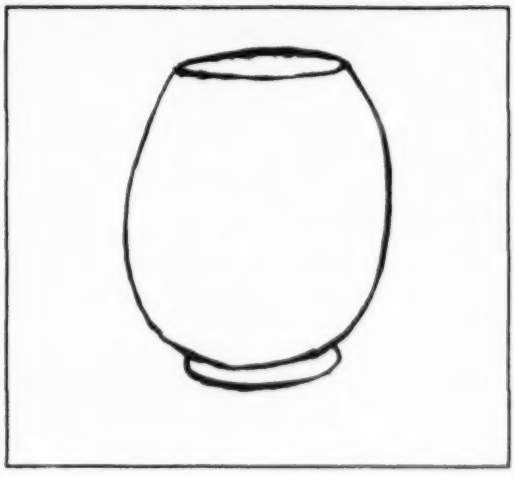
1. You must choose from one of the above themes.
2. Use the Impressionist technique by means of a sponge or brush.
3. All of the canvas should be covered by paint, not too thin.
4. Bright vivid colors should be used.

APPENDIX I

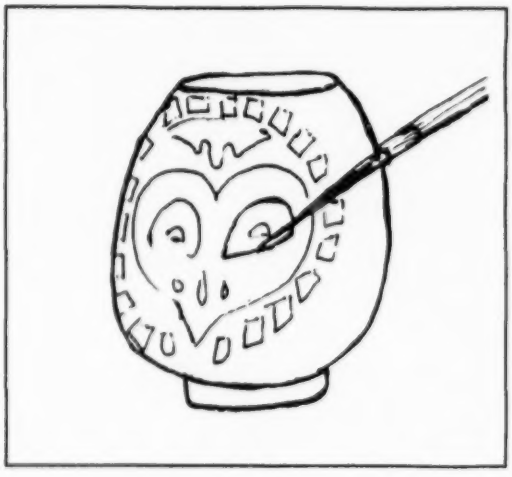
MISHIMA POTTERY ASSIGNMENT

Mishima

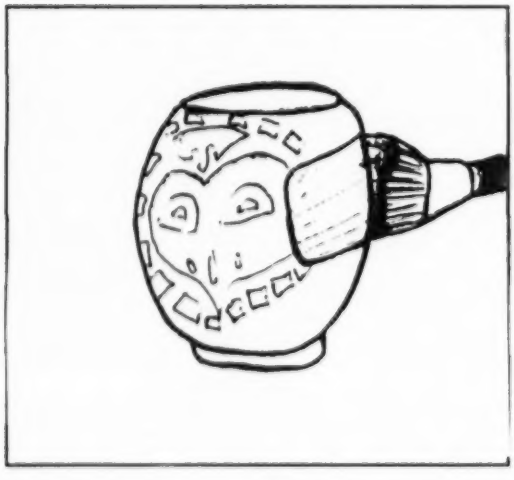
Mishima is a slip inlay technique of Oriental origin. A pattern is cut or scratched into leatherhard clay. The incised lines must be filled with lighter or darker slip. Cover them and the area immediately around them with a coating of slip applied with a heavily loaded small brush. When the slip is dry, the surface is scraped or sanded carefully. Only the incised design remains filled with slip.



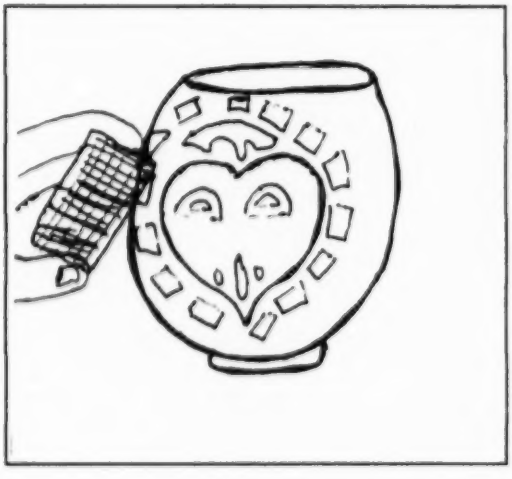
1.
Build a pot, let it become leatherhard.



2.
Scratch design using needle tool



3.
Fill incised areas with colored slip.



4.
Scrape or sand off excess slip when dry.

** Finish, by bisque firing bonedry piece and glazing with a clear glaze. Refire.*

APPENDIX J

OPEN HOUSE SPEECH

September 8, 1999

Good evening. I am Mary Benton, the art teacher at the Junior High. I am very excited about our new art facility. It is wonderful to see the district's backing of the arts and to see the commitment they have in the support of the program. Many view the arts as optional and feel that it is not a necessary subject in the curriculum for all students. "Educators and the public sometimes feel that 'making art' may be interesting and rewarding but is hardly crucial in the context of the child's total education" (Brickell, Jones & Runyan,1988, p. 15). Here at Hawthorn, it has been reaffirmed that art is highly valued and is a necessity in a balanced school curriculum. "No person is truly educated who lacks basic knowledge and skills in the arts" (National Standards for the Arts).

Our art program is integrated with the social studies and language art curriculum. Collaboration with teachers from these disciplines make projects related, not isolated. Integration allows students to see connections and helps them make educational sense of the world. Students have art for seven days, three times a year and periods are one hour long. Thematic units, using the historical theme, are introduced the first day. Students use the remaining six days to complete projects in one of the four different mediums in the room; painting, drawing, pottery and computer graphics. Learning standards have been established and are supported with student and teacher assessments of progress.

This year , I have several goals for improving the program.

1. I will communicate to students that art is not just for the talented. Often, students believe that they are not "good at art" and do not give their full effort. All students, not just a talented few, are able to learn through art. National assessment confirms that the arts can be taught and the more instruction they acquire, the more creative they become (Day, 1998). We all have creative talents, not just a small number of people. Students need to be reminded of this fact and to be shown that the arts are part of a well rounded education and not just for artists.

2. I intend to mat more of the student's artwork and try to make it more like a professional experience and also establish an gallery outside of the art room to prominently display student pieces. It is a gorgeous building, but it will become more **"ours"** with art created exclusively by **our** children. I have always been a firm believer in having students be participants, rather than observers. Fine art should everywhere, not be kept in the classroom. Children need to see how art impacts their lives.

3. I am going to have students develop portfolios in order to see improvement and artistic growth during the school year. Students will begin the portfolio in September 1999 and continue through May of 2000.

4. Those students who wish to have additional opportunities pursuing artistic endeavors, I encourage to join HBC, which is an after school art club,which makes art work specifically for enhancing District 73. This club meets Thursdays from 2:15-3:30 and will begin in a few weeks.

I am very excited about this coming school year and look forward to having the opportunity to teach your child. Thank you very much.

APPENDIX K

POTTER'S WHEEL WORKSHOP

The secret of how Gumby remains calm and flexible...

A number of people have expressed a desire to learn how to work on the potter's wheel. An after school (2:15-3:15) workshop will begin on Fridays beginning in January. If you are interested please fill out the form below and return it to Mary Benton's mail box by Friday, December 16.

_____ I would be interested in attending an after school workshop on the the potter's wheel.

name